

Caravaggio's cliffhangers

The case of St. Matthew

Adapted pdf version (scrollable frames) of
the video with the same title, available at

https://archive.org/details/c1_20260318

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caravaggio%27s_cliffhangers_-_the_case_of_St._Matthew.webm

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2UeLn1kJJTOut3MFIQXwg>





Caravaggio
The Inspiration of St Matthew
Rome, San Luigi dei Francesi
1602



In its most basic layer, the painting begins by depicting St. Matthew being inspired by an angel.



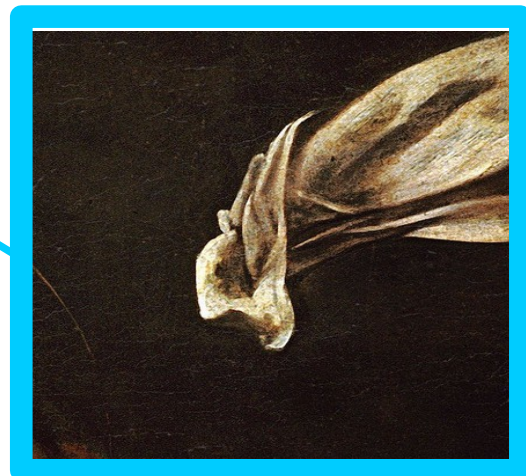
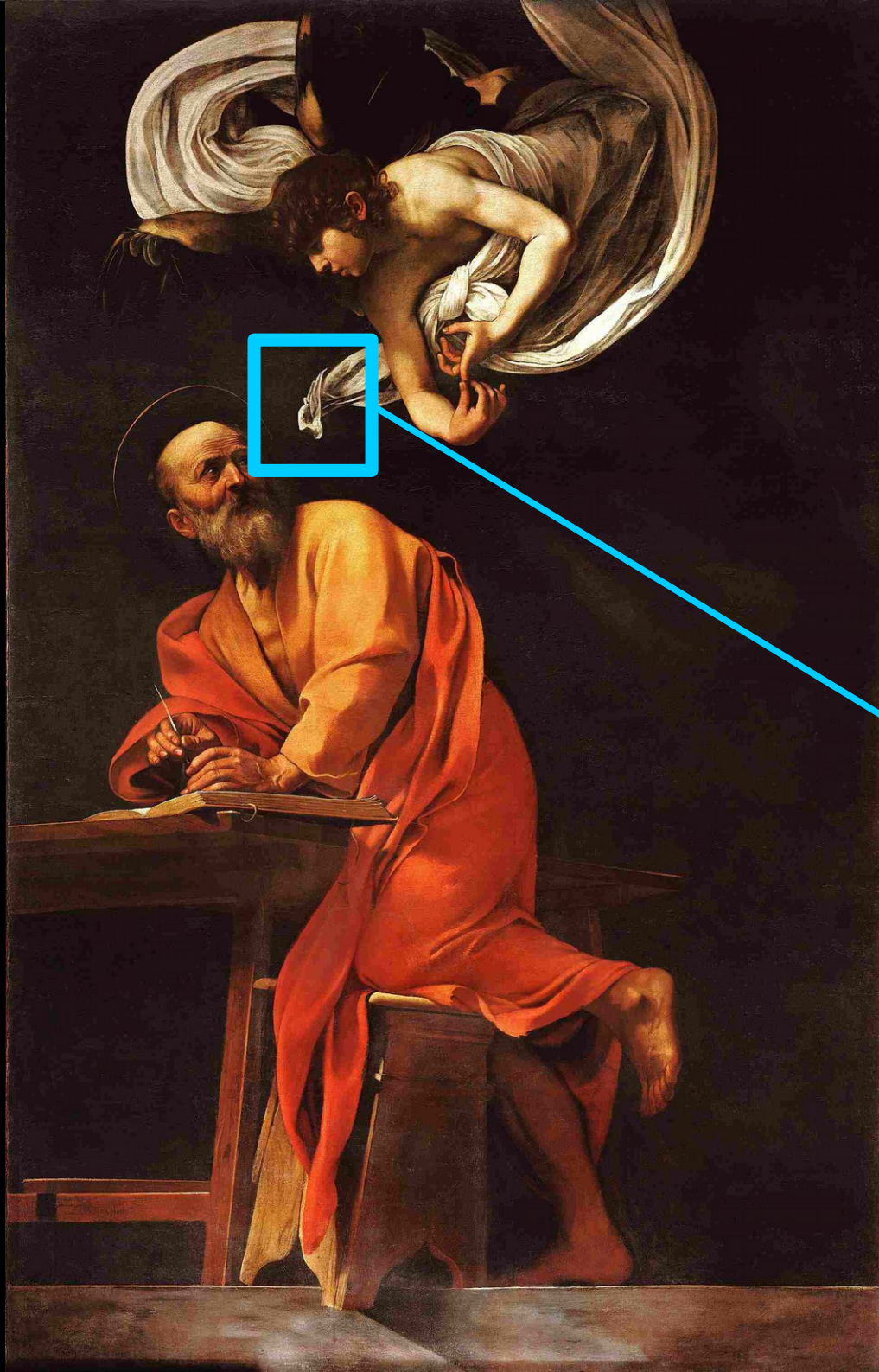
However, the devil works continually to deceive and mislead the faithful. "An no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel If light" (2Cor.11:14).



The main targets are theologians and clergy. To these pastors of the community, St. Paul warned to “watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted”.
(Gal.6:1)

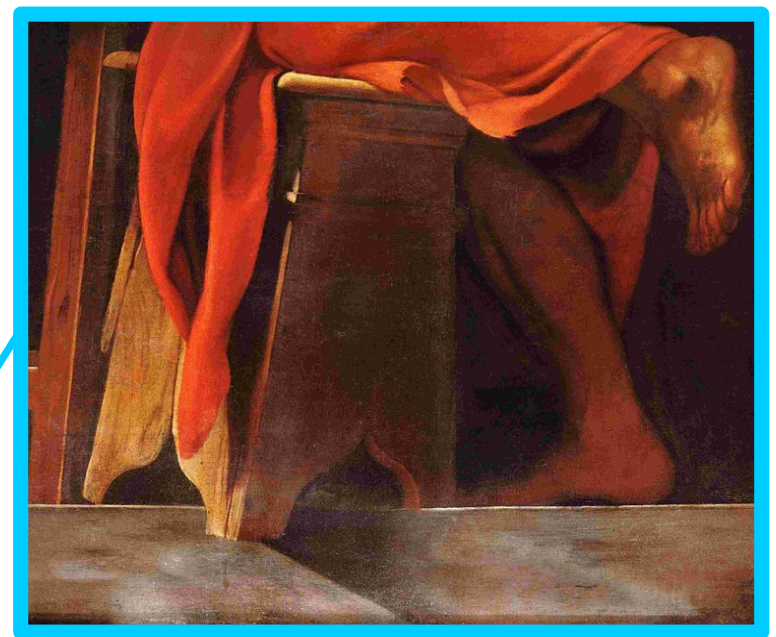
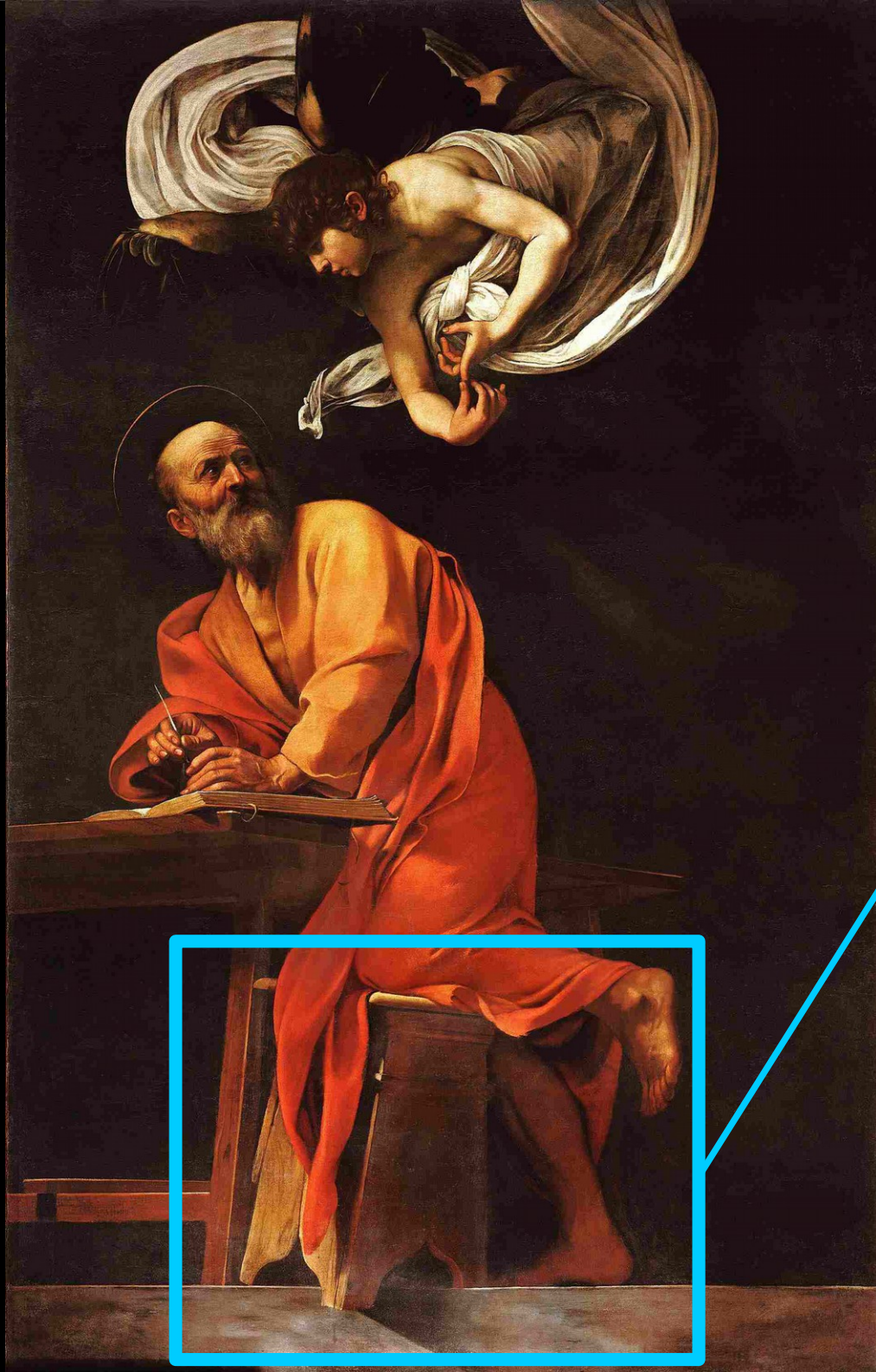


After all, the devil is in the details...





In other words, in this superimposed layer, St. Matthew here plays the role of a theologian/cleric targeted by a deceitful, diabolical angel.



Will he fall?

The end

Credits

written and directed by Michelangelo Merisi (Caravaggio)

researched and edited by Paulo Martins Oliveira (PMO)

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The Inspiration of St Matthew, image by [wikimedia.org/Gonzaloferjar](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gonzaloferjar)

further reading: Paulo Martins Oliveira, *The deceptive angels*, 2013 [academia.com];

idem, "On Caravaggio's storytelling" in *Octógono - cadernos de polissemia Artística*, extra number (25), Jan.13, 2026 [academia.com, archive.org]

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[video version, March 2026; this pdf version, May 2026]